(d)   downloading said prescription data from said carrier through said interface at said pharmacy; and

(e)   filling said prescription at said pharmacy.

2.(AMENDED)   A method as set forth in Claim 1, further including the step of entering a first access code into said carrier to enable access to said prescription data prior to said uploading step.

3.(AMENDED)   A method as set forth in Claim 1, further including the steps of:

(a)   operating a digital clock/calendar within said carrier to generate internal values of time and date;

(b)   providing said carrier with a prescription compliance switch interfaced to said clock/calendar;

(c)   operating said compliance switch by a patient upon taking a medication specified by said prescription; and

(d)   storing in a compliance memory within said carrier respective values of time and date occurring upon operation of said compliance switch.

4.(AMENDED)   A method as set forth in Claim 3, further including the steps of:

(a)   providing said carrier with an annunciator element;

(b)   entering into said carrier by said pharmacist schedule data defining a prescription schedule comprising a plurality of sets of schedule times and dates at which a patient is to take a medication specified by prescription;

(c)   periodically comparing within said carrier said internal values of time and date with said schedule times and dates; and

(d)   activating said annunciator element upon said internal values of time and date matching a set of said schedule time and schedule date.

5.(AMENDED)   A method as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said step of providing said prescription carrier having a communication interface includes the step of providing said

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prescription carrier with an infrared data communication interface.

6.(AMENDED)   A method as set forth in Claim 1, further including the steps of:

    (a)   uploading prescription data defining a plurality of prescriptions for a plurality of medications into said carrier through said interface;

    (b)   downloading said prescription data through said interface; and

    (c)   filling each of said prescriptions defined by said prescription data.

7.(AMENDED)   A method for conveying a prescribed medication to a patient, the method comprising the steps of:

    (a)   providing a digital prescription carrier including a read/write memory and a communication interface;

    (b)   entering a first access code into said carrier to enable software access thereto;

    (c)   uploading prescription data defining a prescription into said carrier through said interface, said prescription calling for the use of a selected medication of a selected dosage on a selected schedule;

    (d)   transferring said carrier by a patient to a pharmacy;

    (e)   entering a second access code into said carrier to enable software access thereto;

    (f)   downloading said prescription data from said carrier through said interface at said pharmacy; and

    (g)   filling said prescription by said pharmacist.

8.(AMENDED)   A method as set forth in Claim 7, further including the steps of:

    (a)   operating a digital clock/calendar within said carrier to generate internal values of time and date;

    (b)   providing said carrier with a prescription compliance switch interfaced to said clock/calendar;

    (c)   operating said compliance switch by a patient upon taking a medication

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specified by said prescription; and

(d)   storing in a compliance memory within said carrier respective values of time and date occurring upon operation of said compliance switch.

9.(AMENDED)   A method as set forth in Claim 8, further including the steps of:

(a)   providing said carrier with an annunciator element;

(b)   entering into said carrier by said pharmacist schedule data defining a prescription schedule comprising a plurality of sets of schedule times and dates at which a patient is to take a medication specified by said prescription;

(c)   periodically comparing within said carrier said internal values of time and date with said schedule times and dates; and

(d)   activating said annunciator element upon said internal values of time and date matching a set of said schedule time and schedule date.

10.(AMENDED)   A method as set forth in Claim 9 wherein said annunciator element includes a vibrating element.

11.(AMENDED)   A method as set forth in Claim 7, wherein said communication interface includes an infrared data communication interface.

12.(AMENDED)   A method as set forth in Claim 7, further including the steps of:

(a)   uploading, by a physician, prescription data defining a plurality of prescriptions for a plurality of medications to be taken on a plurality of schedules into said carrier through said interface;

(b)   downloading, by a pharmacist, said prescription data through said interface; and

(c)   filling each of said prescriptions defined by said prescription data.

13.(AMENDED)   A method as set forth in Claim 7, further including the steps of:

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(a)   providing said carrier with an annunciator element;

(b)   entering into said carrier, by said pharmacist for each of said prescriptions, schedule data defining a respective prescription schedule comprising a plurality of sets of schedule times and dates at which a patient is to take a medication specified by the respective prescription;

(c)   periodically comparing within said carrier said internal values of time and date with said schedule times and dates; and

(d)   activating said annunciator element upon said internal values of time and date matching a set of said schedule time and date.

14.(AMENDED)   A digital prescription carrier apparatus comprising:

(a)   a carrier housing;

(b)   a central processing unit (CPU) positioned within said housing;

(c)   a display device positioned on said housing, interfaced to said CPU, and capable of displaying alphanumeric characters;

(d)   input/output (I/O) interface circuitry positioned in said housing and interfaced to said CPU, said I/O circuitry being capable of interfacing said CPU to an external computer to exchange data therewith;

(e)   data memory circuitry positioned within said housing; and

(f)   prescription software stored in said memory to be processed by said CPU, wherein,

the CPU and the I/O circuitry cooperate to enable

uploading, by a prescriber, of prescription data representing a prescription into said memory circuitry, and downloading of said prescription data at a pharmacy.

15.(AMENDED)   A digital prescription carrier apparatus as set forth in Claim 14, further including:

(a)   a real-time clock/calendar positioned within said housing and interfaced to said CPU;

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(b)   an alert device positioned within said housing and interfaced to said CPU; and

(c)   said prescription software cooperating with said prescription data, said clock/calendar, and said alert device to cause activation of said alert device when a dose of medication prescribed by said prescription data is to be taken.

16.(AMENDED)   A digital prescription carrier apparatus as set forth in Claim 15, further including:

(a)   a compliance switch positioned on said housing and interfaced to said CPU; and

(b)   said prescription software cooperating with said compliance switch to record in said data memory circuitry an occurrence of the operation of said compliance switch subsequent to activation of said alert device.

17.(AMENDED)   A digital prescription carrier apparatus as set forth in claim 15 wherein said alert device includes at least one of:

(a)   a sonic alert device interfaced to said CPU; or

(b)   a vibrating alert device interfaced to said CPU.

18.(AMENDED)   A digital prescription carrier apparatus as set forth in Claim 14, further including:

(a)   a plurality of key switches positioned on said housing an interfaced to said CPU;

(b)   said prescription software causing uploaded prescription data to generate a schedule of dose times for a medication represented by said prescription data; and

(c)   operation of said key switches enabling review of said schedule of dose times for said medication in cooperation with said display device.

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19.(AMENDED)   A digital prescription carrier apparatus as set forth in Claim 14 wherein said I/O interface circuitry includes an infrared data link.

20.(NEW)   A method as set forth in Claim 1, further including the step of entering a second access code into said carrier to enable access to said prescription data prior to said downloading step.

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